

## The New Birth

### John 3:1-10

In today's Scripture, Jesus encounters a religious man named Nicodemus. Their conversation, recorded for us by John, is one of the clearest explanations of the need for the new birth. Praise the Lord for the meeting between these two!

- **Everyone needs the new birth. (1-3)** Nicodemus is a very significant character in John's gospel. Without John's account we might never know of this conversation, and I believe, eventual conversion. (John 7:40-53 and John 19:38-40)

**Nicodemus had a position in religion, but no genuine relationship with God. (1)** Jesus was never impressed by someone's position. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin. According to Jewish tradition, he was one of the three richest men in Jerusalem; yet he was empty!

**Nicodemus had facts about Christ, but no personal faith in Christ. (2).** Nicodemus had made some logical conclusions concerning Jesus. At this point Nicodemus was operating only on logic and reason. Nicodemus was like the others (2:23-24). Nicodemus was impressed by what he had seen.

- **Only God can give the new birth. (4-8)** Jesus makes it clear that there are two kinds of birth: a natural birth and a spiritual birth. All humanity is born under the curse of sin, and therefore they must experience a spiritual birth from above to enter the kingdom of heaven.

If everyone needs to be born again, then the only real question is how? How is the new birth made possible? Where does the new birth come from?

The theological term for being born-again is *regeneration*.

While Christ Jesus, the Son, accomplished our salvation by His righteous obedience and atoning sacrifice, it is the Holy Spirit that applies the work of Christ to the repentant sinner, thus bringing spiritual life. All the work of the Spirit is mysterious in nature. Often much of the work happens instantaneously, and at other times it seems to move in process.

**Wayne Grudem, "Regeneration is the secret act of God in which He imparts new spiritual life to us."**

**J.I. Packer, "Regeneration is the spiritual change wrought in the heart of man by the Holy Spirit."**

When Nicodemus questioned, "How can a man be born when he is old?" Jesus explained that we must be "born from above," from the spiritual life of God. John writes that those who receive Jesus and become children of God are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:13)

**Since regeneration is the work of God alone, how can I be born again?**

Regeneration brings spiritual life and grants saving faith. Ask God to grant you saving faith!

Saving faith is produced by the Word of God. Ask God to give you a hunger and thirst to obey His Word.

The Spirit and the Word convict us of our sin. Ask God to grant you genuine repentance.

**All who repent and believe will be saved!** Trust God's promise and Christ's atoning work!

Now, REST IN CHRIST'S ATONING WORK ALONE!